

**Quality Enhancement Plan  
Division of Student Affairs Exploratory Project  
Summary of Planned Project**

**Project Title:** Enhancing the Freshmen Year Experience through a redesigned Freshmen Year Experience (FYE) Course

**College/Division:** Student Affairs, University Advising Center, College of Arts and Sciences Dean's office

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**List of Individuals Involved:** SLS 1301 Faculty, Graduate Teaching Interns for SLS 1301, Student Affairs Leadership Team, Director of Volunteer UWF!, Director of Student Transition Programs, Student Transition Programs Advisory Committee, Student Success Program Faculty and Staff, Dean of Arts and Sciences

**Brief Description of Project:** The freshmen year experience seminar, SLS 1301, is an elective course for new students taught by Arts and Sciences faculty and staff from the division of student affairs. For fall 2004, the advising center created a UWF textbook for the course based on models from other institutions. Although there is a common curriculum, each section is taught independently.

The course faculty determined that the textbook needed more specifics related to UWF and agreed to work as a team to modify the text and the course around common learning outcomes for UWF first-year students. The course faculty agreed to use the following framework in modifying the textbook and redesigning the course to meet the needs of currently enrolled UWF students and to meet the goals of the QEP project.

- University Learning Outcome Domains
  - Content, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Project Management, Values and Ethics

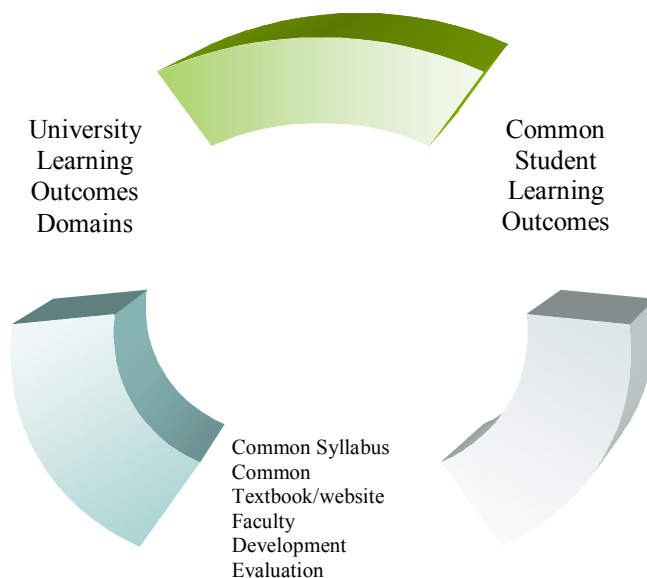
The outcomes for the project will be as follows:

- Common Student Learning Outcomes related to the domains
- Common Syllabus and course curriculum
- Common Textbook for students to read and common workbook/manual or website for student success in the first year (to be developed by course faculty)
- Faculty Development

- On-line course evaluation in collaboration with the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CUTLA)
- Building a community of learners of faculty who teach FYE course and general education courses at UWF

There are six action items related to the completion of this QEP project:

- Modify the current UWF workbook/manual or website so that content and activities are centered around the domains for learning outcomes.
- Adopt a common book for the course that provides a basis for values discussions. This book will also be read by the course faculty and general education faculty in order to weave the learning throughout the general education curriculum.
- Create a common syllabus centered around the domains for learning outcomes
- Incorporate Service Learning as a required component of all sections of SLS
- Conduct faculty development with SLS course faculty to introduce domains for learning outcomes and common student learning outcomes
- Collect and review data related to academic achievement and retention of students who enroll in the FYE course. The data will be used to improve the course and as a foundation for further study.
- Evaluate the learning outcomes with the course faculty and students via survey instruments



**Rationale:** UWF's enrollment is growing, especially at the freshmen level. In fall 2004 in-coming freshmen enrollment surpassed the in-coming transfer student enrollment for the first time in UWF's history. With increased enrollment of new to college students UWF created an office of Student Transition Programs to focus on the Freshmen Year Experience. One of the transition services offered by the UWF Advising Center is the freshmen seminar/success course. This is an elective course but freshmen advisors encourage students to enroll in the course.

With the QEP and an institutional focus on Active Learning and Student Engagement, SLS is one way to engage students in the learning process at UWF. Results of the 2004 NSSE show that scores for first-year students on the Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark could be improved. The FYE course is an appropriate course to introduce and practice the concepts of active and collaborative learning.

**Project Student Learning Outcomes for the redesigned FYE course:**

As a result of active participation in the redesigned Freshmen Year Experience course students will have the ability to:

- Content
  - Locate and utilize university resources designed to assist students with issues related to academic success and personal concerns
  - Locate and utilize a variety of library services and resources
  - Discover a variety of ways to participate in campus life
  - Use the university catalog to understand identify and explain educational terms, rules, regulations, and degree requirements
  - Learn specific methods to manage time efficiently and apply methods during
  - List and apply various strategies for effective study in college
  - Describe typical effective personal money management and budgeting techniques
  - Articulate the major issues involved in developing a healthy lifestyle
  - Identify and apply steps involved in decision making and problem solving
  - Use a variety of self assessments to evaluate career options and to choose a major
- Communication skills
  - Use effective communication techniques
  - Establish additional mentoring relationships and support groups on campus
  - Describe cultural diversity and tolerance
  - Identify and articulate personal learning styles as related to academics
- Critical Thinking
  - Explain the balance between freedom and personal responsibility
  - Identify and apply steps involved in decision making and problem solving
  - Define academic integrity and its application in the university learning environment
- Project Management
  - Identify personal reasons for attending college
  - Identify and set meaningful short and long term goals and objectives
  - Prepare a comprehensive educational plan

- Values and Ethics
  - Describe the ethical issues involved in an academic setting
  - Discover the relationship between service and learning
  - Identify and apply steps involved in decision making and problem solving

**Relationship to Quality Enhancement Plan Goals:**

As UWF moves from the instruction paradigm to the learning paradigm, the FYE course will serve as a foundation course to introduce the concepts and practices related to the learning paradigm. The redesigned curriculum, textbook, and course materials align with the goals of the QEP in the following ways:

- The domains serve as the foundation for the student learning outcomes, course curriculum, faculty development, and course materials
- The purpose of the FYE course is to develop a community of learners and introduce students to the academic culture of UWF, thus discussing student learning outcomes and their relationship to the students' programs.
- Faculty development opportunities will be offered to the instructors and co-instructors of FYE

**Relationship to Academic Learning Compact Domains:**

The student learning outcomes in this course are aligned with the domains of student learning outcomes. This course will introduce students to the concepts related to learning outcomes and the academic learning compacts.

**Desired Student Learning Gains:**

- Improved student retention
- Improved student satisfaction
- Improved scores on the NSSE, specifically in the Academic Learning and Collaboration benchmark
- Improved understanding of transition issues related to University life
- Ability to access resources available on campus to enhance student engagement and student success
- Greater connectivity with UWF and the academic culture at the completion of first semester on campus

**Instructional Strategy Enhancements (focusing on active learning/student engagement):**

- Common course syllabi
- Faculty development to share proven techniques to enhance student engagement
- Resource library for course materials and activities
- Regular meetings of teaching faculty of FYE course
- Enhanced use of technology in FYE course

**Assessment Plan:****Baseline:** Current course syllabi, current textbook, course evaluations from 2004**Formative:** Throughout the course students will be asked to reflect on what they have learned and how a particular activity or assignment met one or more of the learning outcomes. This data will be used during instructor meetings to enhance the course.**Summative:** Students will complete the University course evaluation and a specific evaluation designed to assess the student learning outcomes for the course. Faculty for the course will complete an evaluation of the course materials, curriculum, and faculty development sessions and meetings. This data will be used to further enhance the course and institutional changes for all sections of FYE.**Information Dissemination Plan:** Dr. Ford and Dr. Westcott will serve as leaders of the project and will share information with their respective staffs on a monthly basis. In addition, Drs. Ford and Westcott will present project and progress to the Freshmen Year Experience committee and to the Provost.**Institutionalization Plan:** The newly designed course will be piloted in no less than one-half of the sections of the FYE course in fall 2005 and evaluated in spring 2006. Modifications will be made to the text and course in spring 2006, and the course will be taught using the common syllabus and text in fall 2006.

In addition, the project leaders will work with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and general education faculty to explore FYE being a required course in the UWF general education curriculum.

**Resources to Be Used:**

| <b>Resource</b>  | <b>Reason</b>  | <b>Cost</b> | <b>Source of funding</b>          |
|--|--|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Graduate Assistant                                     | To assist with text development  | \$1700      | QEP                               |
| Graduate Assistant                                     | To conduct study to determine the retention rate of students who completed SLS with those who did not over the past four years | \$1350      | Advising Center                   |
| College Student Personnel Intern                       | To assist with text development  | 0           | Advising Center & Student Affairs |
| FYE Expert for faculty development                     | To conduct faculty development workshop with SLS faculty   | \$1500      | QEP                               |
| CSPA graduate interns                                  | To serve as co-instructors for SLS   | 0           | Advising Center & Student Affairs |
| Materials for faculty development and resource library |  | \$500       | QEP                               |

| <b>Resource</b>  | <b>Reason</b>  | <b>Cost</b> | <b>Source of funding</b> |
|--|--|-------------|--------------------------|
| Design of Assessment materials                                     | Collaborate with CUTLA to develop on-line assessment of course                                     | \$200       | QEP                      |
| Instructor copies of common textbook for general education faculty | Estimate purchasing 15 copies of \$20.00 book; course instructors will receive copy from publisher | \$300       | QEP                      |

### **Timeline for Project Activities and Events:**

| <b>Project Goals</b>   | <b>Activities</b>   | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Persons Involved</b>  |
|--|---|-----------------|--|
| Modify the current UWF textbook so that chapter content and course activities are centered around the domains for learning outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize chapter content around domains</li> <li>• Adopt common learning outcomes for course</li> <li>• Solicit faculty and student affairs staff to create resource materials for text or website</li> <li>• Organize text or website</li> <li>• Edit text or website</li> <li>• Publish text or website</li> </ul> | Spring 2005     | SLS Faculty<br>Anna Shiplee<br>Project Leaders<br>Faculty and staff to write text sections |
| Adopt a common book for the course that provides a basis for values discussions.   | This book will also be read by the course faculty and general education faculty in order to weave the learning throughout the general education curriculum.   | Spring 2005     | Project Leaders<br>Dean of Arts and Sciences<br>SLS faculty<br>General Education faculty   |
| Create a common syllabus centered around the six domains for learning outcomes   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate course faculty on learning domains</li> <li>• Adopt common learning outcomes for SLS course</li> <li>• Create draft of syllabus with readings, course activities, e-learning activities, etc.</li> </ul>   | Spring 2005     | Project Leaders<br>SLS faculty<br>Anna Shiplee   |
| Incorporate Service Learning as a required component of all sections of SLS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add service learning as required course activity</li> <li>• Ask Volunteer UWF! to draft course responsibilities related to service learning</li> <li>• Add service learning orientation to class session</li> </ul>  | Summer 2005     | Tom Westcott<br>Amanda Crowell   |

| <b>Project Goals</b>  | <b>Activities</b>   | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Persons Involved</b>   |
|---|---|-----------------|---|
| Conduct faculty development with SLS course faculty to introduce domains for learning outcomes and common student learning outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct workshop with a FYE expert on the Freshmen Year Experience and SLS type courses</li> <li>• Coordinate with course faculty to incorporate common e-learning tools in the course</li> <li>• Create a library of shared resources for the course</li> </ul>   | Summer 2005     | Debbie Ford<br>Jim Hurd<br>Anna Shiplee<br>Kathy Wilson                           |
| Collect and review data related to academic achievement and retention of students who enroll in the FYE course.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data will be used to improve the course and as a foundation for further study.</li> </ul>  | Spring 2005     | Tom Westcott  |
| Evaluate the learning outcomes with the course faculty and students via survey instruments  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop instrument to use with students</li> <li>• Develop instrument to use with faculty</li> <li>• Conduct evaluations in 14<sup>th</sup> week of semester</li> <li>• Assess if outcomes were met</li> <li>• Create report of evaluations and project</li> <li>• Modify text or website, syllabus, and faculty development based on outcomes of evaluations and meetings with faculty</li> </ul> | Fall 2005       | Project leaders<br>SLS faculty<br>Graduate assistants<br>Ann Shiplee<br><br>CUTLA |